PLANNING AHEAD

Notes for the Planning and Policy Community

Volume 6, Issue 8 September 2003

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Economic and Environmental Analysis Conference 2004: "Toward Integrated Water Resources Management"

Bruce D Carlson – CECW-PG

Here's more information about the upcoming E & E Conference, scheduled for April 13-15, 2004 in Baltimore:

This conference will provide a forum to discuss economic and environmental issues related to the Corps mission areas, with special emphasis on how these technical disciplines support key business lines. Over three days we will address a wide variety of topics related to plan formulation, environmental evaluation and economic analysis presented in a mix of joint and concurrent sessions. The conference will emphasize interactions among economists, environmental scientists, and engineers. The format will allow for discussions of lessons learned, case studies, and current and potential future issues facing the Corps,

issues relating to the full range of Corps activities including problem identification, plan formulation and evaluation, engineering and construction, operations and maintenance, and adaptive management and monitoring may be discussed.

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS – DEADLINE 17 DECEMBER 2003

A key element of the conference will be practitioners introducing their work and sharing their experiences by presenting professional papers. Papers should focus on how challenging issues in economic and/or environmental analysis have been met, and how this work may apply to others.

Topics that illustrate applications supporting any of the various business lines are encouraged – for example environmental analyses in the flood, navigation, or hydropower business lines, as well as in ecosystem restoration; and similarly for socio-economic analyses. Proposals in multi-purpose settings are also welcomed, as are those involving special aspects of plan formulation, partnering, or stakeholder involvement. Presentations highlighting field/lab cooperative efforts are encouraged, and should be submitted by the District proponent wherever possible.

Papers will be presented in concurrent sessions, 15 minutes per paper with a 5 minute discussion period. Proposals should include a summary/abstract not to exceed 300 words, plus a brief biographical statement about the presenter including: applicant's office, job title, degrees held, years of experience, and areas of professional interest.

Before submitting proposals, please discuss your ideas with your supervisor, and be sure you will be able to attend the conference. Submittals will be accepted by email only, and should include the words "E & E Proposal" in the message subject line. All proposals are due by COB 17 December 2003 – and early submittals will be appreciated. Applicants will be contacted no later than 30 January 2004 regarding the status of their proposals.

Abstract submittals and questions about the E & E Conference 2004 should be directed to the Conference Chair, Bruce Carlson. Watch future issues of Planning Ahead for updates on other conference sessions presenting the latest from Corps Labs, Centers of Expertise, HQ, and other invited speakers.

The Planner's Core Curriculum -- A Graduate's Perspective

Shana Heisey Olig – CECW-IWR

It is not an easy task, completing all seven Planner's Core Curriculum (PCC) classes. The courses run about four days apiece, which totals 224 hours of class time. For perspective, that is about the equivalent class time necessary to complete six one-semester graduate courses and requires over a month away from work and home. I had to travel 13,536 miles to attend these sessions, which is almost as far as traveling from Washington, D.C. to China and back again. Amazingly though, I am not the only one to tackle this program. Three planners from SWD, Diana Needham-Kirby, Jonathan Long, and Nicolle Dailey, also celebrated their PCC graduation in July. Given the effort involved, why did we do it and what do we have to show for our many weeks away from home?

As a start, we all fall within the target audience for the program, which is planners with less than five years of experience. These courses are not designed for subject matter experts nor to teach someone everything they need to know about a specific field. The program lays a foundation of the basic knowledge required by people new to planning in the Corps. For example, Economics, Hydraulics and

Hydrology, and Environmental Considerations courses are not intended for only economists, engineers, or biologists. Instead, the classes are designed to teach how the different disciplines interact within planning. Each class explains a unique element but they all fit together to explain the interconnectivity of planning.

The seven classes fall into two categories: overview material (Planner's Orientation Workshop, Planning Principles and Procedures, and Plan Formulation Workshop) and technical material (Environmental Considerations, Economic Analysis, Hydraulics and Hydrology, and Public Involvement & Teaming in Planning). Although sequencing is not required, the technical courses are most beneficial when the students have a decent understanding of planning basics.

The classes are long, no question there. Most working professionals have not spent eight hours in a classroom for many years, and it is not an easy task to absorb all the information presented in such a short period of time. The instructors, however, are really excellent. All are knowledgeable about their subjects and have a genuine desire to help improve planning capabilities. In order to help maintain interest the lectures are mixed with activities, including field trips, case studies, and practical exercises.

Although everyone's experiences will be different, here are some of the highlights from my seven weeks in school:

- Gaining respect for the difficulties of professional facilitation by having to practice the skill in Public Involvement and Teaming. Given the contentiousness of many Corps studies, getting people together to have a productive meeting is an invaluable skill.

- Learning about the Everglades project from a South Florida Water Management District representative in Planning Process and Procedures. Since the Everglades Study receives much attention and is an atypical Corps project, it was interesting to hear some of the study details and problems they have encountered.

- Getting out in the field- a boat tour of NY Harbor in the H&H class and an ecosystem restoration project in the Environmental Considerations class in Little Rock- both trips did a great job of applying course material to an actual project.

PCC Factoids:

- Three of the courses, Planner's Orientation Workshop, Planning Process and Procedures, and Economic Analysis in Planning, are also offered through the PROSPECT program.

- In FY03 alone, 413 students attended at least one course. Over one thousand training slots have been filled since the program began. The program has been successful in reaching people across the country.

- The students represent a diverse demographic pool, including a range of occupations, such as engineers, social scientists, biological scientists, community planners, administrative positions, real estate specialists, lawyers, and others, as well as a variety of grade levels.

- 32 total sessions have been offered, 18 in FY03. Almost every Division has hosted courses through this program.

- 14 sessions will be offered in FY04. For a complete listing of the proposed schedule, see the PCC website: http://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/iwr/planningcapabilities/curriculum.htm. 🕮

"Dam Removal Research: Status and Prospects" – A Report from the Heinz Center

"The book…offers insights into the many aspects that factor into dam removal decisions, [and] can be helpful to all those engaged in and affected by decisions on the future of dams – state and local officials, businesses, engineers, researchers, and the public." The Heinz Center is an environmentally oriented "nonprofit, nonpartisan institution dedicated to improving the scientific and economic foundation for environmental policy through multisectoral collaboration."

For an additional view see the *White Paper on Removal of Functioning Dams* of the Environmental and Water Resources Institute of the American Society of Civil Engineering (EWRI).

[Thanks to Bev Getzen for the Heinz Center Report lead. *The Editor*.] 🕮

International Association for Impact Assessment -- Annual Meeting

Richard Fristik – CEIWR-MD

The 24th Annual Meeting of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) will be held in Vancouver, BC, 26-29 April 2004. The major theme of the conference is 'Impact Assessment for Industrial Development - Whose Business Is It?' The deadline for workshop/ session topics has passed, but paper/poster abstracts can be submitted until January 15, 2004. Some of the session themes of potential interest to Corps planners include: public involvement, land use planning and natural resource management, water management, transportation, and environmental follow-up, among many others. Further details on the conference and submission guidelines can be found on the IAIA website.

Submitted by Rich Fristik, CEIWR-MD (703-428-8066).

[*Editor's Note*: Rich has been named co-editor of the 'Professional News' section of the IAIA quarterly newsletter. This section seeks brief (< 150 words) tidbits on emerging developments or noteworthy agency actions in advancing the practice of impact assessment. Rich says he'll happily guide folks along if they have potential submissions.] 🕮

American Indian Cultural Communications Course

Bill Butler – CELRB-TD-EA

The Buffalo District will host DoD's American Indian Cultural Communications Course on 21-23 October 2003. This course is designed to help DoD personnel understand the DoD American Indian/ Alaska Native Policy and how to implement it in conjunction with their activities. The instruction covers three days, and special cultural events are scheduled outside of class time.The course is taught primarily

by American Indian trainers, with some segments presented by DoD and regional American Indian participants. DoD is working to arrange a cultural event with tribes located in the Buffalo area.

The following topics are covered in the course:

- History of American Indian laws and the legal base for DoD policy
- Federal laws and policies impacting DoD relationships with American Indians
- Introduction to tribal concepts and culture
- Cross-cultural communication
- Strategies for consulting with tribes

For a video overview, you can view a 2-minute introduction on DENIX.

There is no registration fee, but class size is limited. For more information, please e-mail Dr. Donata Renfrow, Course Coordinator.

Brighter Future for Former GE Facility Turned Superfund Site as Corps Assists EPA in Clean Up

JoAnne Castagna – CENAN –PP-C

In 1996, a Hoboken, New Jersey resident saw droplets of an odd substance falling from their ceiling onto their counter top in their apartment. State health officials were notified and investigated the apartment complex. They discovered mercury, a human toxin, underneath the building's wooden floorboards and absorbed in the walls, and mercury vapor in the air. Urine tests given to the residents showed unacceptable levels of mercury in certain children living in the building. The 27,000 square foot building was proclaimed an imminent public health hazard.

The building was located at 722 Grand Street in Hudson County, Hoboken, NJ in a primarily residential community. Approximately 40,000 residents live within a one-mile radius of the building and a high school is located nearby. The structure includes a five-story building and an attached four-story brick townhouse.

From 1910 to 1965 the building served as a mercury manufacturing facility for General Electric (GE). For 55 years the industrial building produced mercury vapor lamps and mercury connector switches. Mercury vapor lamps were popular in the early part of the 20th Century, often used as street lamps. The mercury vapor was enclosed in a glass bulb and gave off a particularly cold, harsh, blue-green colored light.

In the early to mid 1990's the five-story building was converted into 16 residential apartments and artists studios. After the mercury was discovered in the mid nineties, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) investigated the building further and decided that the site needed to be remediated. The selected remedy included soil sampling, excavation, demolition of the building, and off site disposal of materials.

The EPA asked the New York District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to supervise the clean up that was designed by General Electric's contractor, Blaslund, Bouck, and Lee, Inc. (BBL) and

carried out by BBL's contractor, Sabre Demolition, Inc. General Electric was required under administrative order to perform the remediation.

The Corps also assisted the EPA in evacuating and relocating the 16 families and 20 businesses that occupied the area. The federal government bought out their property and they all were eventually provided permanent residence.

"Remediation of the building involved disassembling it by hand and demolishing the brick walls using jack hammers. The building's windows were removed and the brick surfaces beneath them inspected for mercury contamination. The floor was removed one bay at a time and inspected for mercury. The concrete slab and subsurface piping was removed and mercury contamination was removed from the surrounding soil," said Neil Ravensbergen, Project Engineer, New York District.

While remediation was taking place, measures were taken to protect the surrounding population from mercury contamination. Measures included setting up an air handling system to filter out any mercury vapor; installing the building with scaffolding and covering it with shrink wrap to eliminate dust migration from the site; placing side walk closings, a perimeter fence, and concrete barriers around the site; monitoring the air for mercury, dust, and noise throughout the work day; and establishing a water treatment plant to process water that came in contact with mercury contaminated materials.

The non-hazardous solid waste and asbestos containing material that was removed during remediation was sent to waste management facilities in New Jersey and Pennsylvania and mercury-containing debris was shipped to hazardous waste landfills in New York and Alabama. Elemental mercury was recycled.

"So far the project has been successful. The residents are happy and we have made significant progress on the remediation of the site and restoration is imminent. We are continuing to sample and remediate the soil at the site and in neighboring yards. The project is estimated to be completed by Spring 2004," said Ravensbergen.

The Corps feels that the project's success is due to the teamwork between the various agencies, "As a team we developed an understanding of each others concerns and needs and worked together with the EPA and GE to resolve issues and manage the work and provide a safe work environment," said Ravensbergen.

The EPA agrees, "I think our working relationship has been excellent. The Corps staff, when reporting problems to me, always suggests technically feasible and sound solutions," said Jon Gorin, Remedial Project Manager, U.S. EPA Region II. He adds, "Also, over the years, I've found that the engineers from the Corps have a good sense of when an issue is important, and when it is something relatively minor. I've not always found that to be the case when working with oversight staff from private firms."

"I have worked at several superfund sites and this has been a real success in terms of removing a serious health hazard to the public," said Ravensbergen. "Not only was this building not structurally sound, but the mercury contamination was overwhelming and truly a health hazard to anyone on or around it." He adds, "It's a shame to loose a piece of history but it was a benefit to the overall environment."

The TopoZone -- Web Site of Note

Thanks to Jeff Laufle, CENWD, for bringing TopoZone to our attention. This is a production of Maps a la carte, Inc, a USGS Digital Cartographic Business Partner. The site has topographic maps for the entire United States at several scales. It is easily searchable by place name such as town or river and state and by other means such as decimal degrees, or UTM coordinates. [Thanks to Ellen Cummings for forwarding this to Planning Ahead. *The Editor.*]

Economic Principles for Sound Water Planning

Sound like a reference to the Principles and Guidelines? Not equal to the P&G, but similar perhaps, *Economic Principles for Sound Water Planning* is an evaluation guide produced by the National Wildlife Federation, Environmental Defense, and the Texas chapter of the Sierra Club, with funding from a number of foundations. The environmental groups' Texas WaterMatters website says the *Principles* "provide an introduction and guide to the use of sound economic principles in water planning. These principles can assist planners both in the process of accurately forecasting future water demand, and the evaluation and selection of projects to meet that demand." (At the website see the "Hot off the Press" link toward the bottom of page; it's a pdf.)

What's this all about? Texas is planning its water supply needs for the next fifty years. The Texas Water Development Board page is here, and the Board's planning page here. [Thanks again to Bev Getzen for the lead. *The Editor.*]

National Transportation Atlas Databases 2003-Shapefile Format

Arlene L.Dietz—CEIWR-NDC

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics, U.S. Department of Transportation recently released its new *National Transportation Atlas Databases 2003*. This is a set of nationwide geographic databases of transportation facilities, transportation networks, and associated infrastructure. These datasets include spatial information for transportation modal networks and intermodal terminals, as well as the related attribute information for these features. This product includes only data. Taking full advantage of this product requires a Geographic Information System (GIS). Each dataset is presented in shapefile format—a data structure compatible with most GIS software packages. The CDs may be ordered directly from BTS by calling 202-366-DATA, e-mail at answers@bts.gov or website http://www.bts.gov/gis.

Up-to-date navigation network shapefile, waterborne commerce by links, and associated geo-referenced port and terminal facilities are available directly from the Corps Navigation Data Center via website www.iwr.usace.army.mil/ndc or *NDC's 2003 NDC Publications and U.S. Waterway Data CD*. As owner of the waterway files on the BTS CD, NDC makes corrections and updates annually to the CD and continuously on the web site. Therefore, you will find the most up-to-date geo-referenced waterway information on the NDC site. If you ever need more current port, lock, and dock facility information call NDC's manager, Virginia Pankow at 703-428-9047; more current waterborne commerce (both official domestic and foreign statistics for 2002 (preliminary) and earlier years and the 2003 trade-based foreign commerce through June 2003 are available via the NDC web site or by contacting Peggy Galliano (for 2002) at 504-862-1424 and Doug McDonald for the 2003 foreign at 703-428-6495.

Johnson Creek, Arlington, Texas, Flood Damage Reduction (Evacuation) Project

National Nonstructural / Flood Proofing Committe

The Johnson Creek project has a storied past, too lengthy to be described here. The original project formulation put forth a channel modification project that was later found to be unacceptable. The initial attempt at nonstructural formulation resulted in a B/C ratio less than unity. The local sponsors took a stab at it, and came up with a greenway plan much larger in scope than the original project, and ultimately too costly to implement. The Fort Worth District became involved again and came up with a reasonable nonstructural alternative which could tie into a greenway plan at a later date.

Problem: Rapidly developing community, increased flooding due to urbanization, loss of habitat, unmet recreation needs.

Corps investigations:

- Channel improvement alternative economically justified but unacceptable.
- Nonstructural alternative (permanent evacuation of homes) not economically justified based on flood damage reduction only.
- Re-formulated nonstructural alternative includes flood damage reduction, recreation in the evacuated floodplain and ecosystem restoration area.

Implemented plan:

- Acquired/removed 140 structures in the 25-year floodplain
- Acquired 155 acres of undeveloped land in the corridor
- 11,400 feet of recreational trails
- 70 picnic sites
- Pavilion
- 4 footbridges
- Information kiosk
- Plantings
- Parking area at access points

If you have nonstructural news, a project, or other related information you wish to share, feel free to e-mail Larry Buss, Omaha District, NFPC Chairman, larry.s.buss@usace.army.mil or Ken Zwickl, kenneth.j.zwickl@usace.army.mil

Instructions for Contributors to Planning Ahead

This newsletter is designed to improve the communication among all the planners and those we work with throughout the Corps. We hope that future editions will have mostly information and perspective from those of you on the front lines in the districts. We hope that these notes become a forum for you to share your experiences to help all of us learn from each other. We can't afford to reinvent the wheel in each office. We welcome your thoughts, questions, success stories, and bitter lessons so that we can share them on these pages. The articles should be short (2-3 paragraphs) except in some cases where you just have to say more.

- Use MS WORD
- Use "normal" style
- Use Times New Roman font, 11 point
- All text should be left justified with start of each paragraph indented by one tab stop.
- Each article should have short title with only initial letter of each word capitalized
- Following each title should be author's name and organization
- Last line should be contact information – phone number or e-mail address 🕮

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Submissions Deadline

The deadline for material for the next issue is 29 October 2003.

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